

CHRISTIANITY AND THE WAR

By the

REV. C. L. DRAWBRIDGE, M.A.

Author of "Common Objections to Christianity,"

"Popular Attacks on Christianity," etc., etc.

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PART I

" Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth with Falsehood, for the good or evil side;
Then it is the brave man chooses, while the coward stands aside."

LOWELL.

THIS great war represents not only a trial of material strength between nations, but also a clash of rival ideals. We are engaged in a moral and in a spiritual warfare as well as in a material conflict. Let us consider what are the rival aspirations that have come into violent collision. We will commence with those of the Prussian military oligarchy, ideals which have been popularized by such men as General Fredrich von Bernhardi.

General von Bernhardi's moral code is not original, it has been derived from another, and it is with this source of his ideals that we are primarily concerned. But let us deal first of all with Bernhardi's ideals, that is to say with those of the Potsdam militarists. He and they advocate aggressive militarism, inspired by the precepts that might is right and that expediency always must and ought to take precedence when self-interest clashes with solemn promises or with such obligations as those of justice and mercy.

On pages 16 and 19 of his book, *Germany and the Next War*, Bernhardi writes:*

* This book was first written in 1911, but it has since gone through many editions and revisions.

“‘To supplant or be supplanted is the essence of life,’ says Goethe, and the strong life gains the upper hand. The law of the stronger holds good everywhere. Those forms survive which are able to procure themselves the most favourable conditions of life, and to assert themselves in the universal economy of Nature. The weaker succumb. . . .”

“The man of strong will and strong intellect tries by every means to assert himself, the ambitious strive to rise, and in this effort the individual is far from being guided merely by the consciousness of right. There can be no doubt on this point. The nation is made up of individuals, the State of communities. The motive which influences each member is prominent in the whole body. It is a persistent struggle for possessions, power and sovereignty, which primarily governs the relations of one nation to another, and *right is respected so far only as it is compatible with advantage.** So long as there are men who have human feelings and aspirations, so long as there are nations who strive for an enlarged sphere of activity, so long will conflicting interests come into being and occasions for making war arise.”

“Might is at once the supreme right, and the dispute as to what is right is decided by the arbitrament of war. War gives a biologically just decision, since its decisions rest on the very nature of things.”†

Bernhardi's reference to biology means that it is a law of nature for the strong to prey upon the weak, and he reduces morality among men to the level of the non-moral sphere. He goes on to say:—

“The knowledge, therefore, that war depends on biological laws leads to the conclusion that every

* The italics are mine.

† *Germany and the Next War*, p. 23.

attempt to exclude it from international relations must be demonstrably untenable. But it is not only a biological law, but a moral obligation, and, as such, an indispensable factor in civilization.*

"Reflection thus shows not only that war is an unqualified necessity, but that it is justifiable from every point of view.†

" 'It has always been,' H. von Treitschke tells us, 'the weary, spiritless and exhausted ages which have played with the dream of perpetual peace.' "‡

According to this view every strong man ought to oppress those who are weaker; every strong class in a community (such as the Potsdam military caste) should oppress weaker sections of the community; and nations like Germany should oppress nations like Belgium. This is not only considered to be right but to be a necessity, according to Bernhardt. The answer to the question which is asked by man's moral nature, the question, "What is the supreme good?" is answered by the Potsdam teachers thus: Power is the supreme good to which man's moral aspirations point. Might is the supreme right.

Mr Blatchford writes:

"The German nation is a vast fighting machine, drilled and organized for the purpose of international robbery with violence. . . . One of the maxims of Herr Clausewitz is that war is a part of policy: That is, as if one should say force is part of a bargain. It means that instead of bargaining with your unloaded pistol in your hip pocket, you are to bargain with your loaded pistol in your hand."

* *Ibid.*, p. 24.

† *Ibid.*, p. 30.

‡ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Professor Heinrich von Treitschke is a most powerful and brilliant historical writer whose life has been spent in rewriting German history in the interests of militarism and in passionately inspiring the Germans with boundless imperial ideals, ideals which are to be realized by means of aggressive military conquest. He has taught Germany to expect and to set about obtaining, by means of conquest, a great world empire, at the expense, of course, of other nations, notably at the expense of the small States of Europe and, later on, at the expense of Great Britain.

These powerful German writers whom I have mentioned are but typical of several literary men and of numerous orators who have wholeheartedly devoted their great talents to the same ideal of imperial expansion by means of aggressive wars. All these men prophesy a mighty German empire, built up, in the future, by the policy of the mailed fist and on the principle that might is the supreme measure of right.

“ The good old rule
Sufficeth them, the simple plan,
That they should take who have the power,
And they should keep who can.”

WORDSWORTH.

Bernhardi says, over and over again, in his book from which I have quoted, that no nation can be expected to keep treaties if it pays the nation to break them. In this war Germany has deliberately acted upon this principle, ignoring not only her international treaties, but also the well-known rules of civilized warfare and the fundamental laws of humanity as well.

These writers, however, do but apply to German imperialism the general principles which were laid down by Frederick Nietzsche. Therefore it is with his ideals that we are primarily concerned.

The writings of Nietzsche, the notorious German thinker, have profoundly affected the individuals of the Potsdam military caste, and have done much to form the ideals of the individual rulers and statesmen of Germany, as well as of educated Germans generally. The disciples of Nietzsche, however, have not adopted all of his views because during the earlier part of his life he was an individualist, not a patriot, and even in later life Nietzsche's ideal was not imperialist nor nationalist. He advocated the development of a super-type, an aristocracy, irrespective of nationality, whereas the educated people in Germany are, for the most part, patriots and imperialists. But very many Germans have adopted Nietzsche's selfish, brutal, bullying ideals on the subject of what he terms "master-morality" in contradistinction to what he contemptuously calls "slave-morality."

Nietzsche secured world-wide notoriety by forcibly advocating the ideal of force and by pouring scorn upon the ideal of gentleness, and he has made a great name for himself by pleading the supremacy of expediency over righteousness. According to him Jesus Christ's most characteristic ideals represent contemptible "slave-morality," a morality which Nietzsche maintains is utterly unworthy of the appreciation, still less of the acceptance, of strong and virile men. Nietzsche delighted to call himself Anti-Christ.

This clever leader of the thought of the members

of the Prussian military clique which dominates Germany, this much-admired exponent of what he termed "master-morality," poured bitter scorn upon our Lord's ideal of *humility*. Nietzsche taught that humility can only be the contemptible ideal of the mean, of the spiritless, of the degenerate, of the weakling, and of the enslaved, of those whose mission in life it is to be exploited on behalf of the strong, and to be made use of by the aggressive and by the dominant. There is certainly very little modesty displayed by the typical disciple of Nietzsche, the average German officer, and Nietzsche himself was not a humble man. Shortly before he went mad he wrote to Miss Meysenbug:

"I have given the deepest book to Mankind (Zarathustra); I am the most independent spirit in Europe and the only German writer."

M. A. Mügge in his fair and sympathetic book on Nietzsche writes:

"One more book came from his pen, a kind of autobiography, *Ecce Homo*, a fitting coping-stone to his work before his mental death. Written in a few weeks, it is an interesting document, but sad reading. Self-satisfaction and self-assertion are pushed to the extreme. . . . The chapter headings are: 'Why I am so Wise'; 'Why I am so Clever'; 'Why I write such Excellent Books'; 'Why I am a Fatality.' Heine and he are 'the greatest artists of the German language that have ever existed'; 'I did a host of things of the highest rank—things that no man can do nowadays.' . . . 'To take up one of my books is one of the rarest honours that a man can pay himself;' . . . 'Before my time there was no psychology.' " *

* *Friedrich Nietzsche*, by Maximilian A. Mügge (T.C. & E.C. Jack). p. 35.

Nietzsche, who advocated bullying, bitterly attacked the idea of *gentleness*, that quality which is the essential characteristic of the true gentleman, the quality which, somewhat unfortunately, is rendered "meekness" in our Authorized Version of the Bible. "The gentle shall inherit the earth,"* said Jesus Christ. "Not at all," said Nietzsche, "violence is the characteristic of the superman and of the superclass who inherit the earth." The German military war lords have adopted the Nietzschean ideal and they have inculcated it into their military machine, which acts upon the principle: The violent shall, by means of the mailed fist, acquire a glorious reputation for greatness, that greatness which is the only solid foundation for empire. The philosopher of the supremacy of might over right sang the praises of those characteristics which are the very opposite of the ones which characterize the true gentleman. Nietzsche advocated those qualities which his disciple and his supporters displayed in the Zabern incident.

Nietzsche, so far from having any appreciation for *disinterestedness* or any respect for self-sacrifice, advocated instead selfish acquisitiveness, studied egotism, and energetic self-assertiveness. He further advocated *heartlessness rather than tenderness*, and masterfulness rather than loving and courteous service. Taking his ideal from the non-moral sphere of life, the struggle for existence amongst beasts, he maintained that Christianity not only interferes with the necessary elimination of the unfit by the natural process of the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, but that Christianity de-

* St. Matt v, 5.

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liberately makes a virtue of preserving the weak and defenceless from extermination, and even puts a premium upon unfitness. Nietzsche, who, as I have said, frequently called himself "The Anti-Christ," wrote:

"Pity is opposed to the tonic passions which enhance the energy of the feeling of life, its action is depressing. A man loses power when he pities. On the whole, pity thwarts the law of development which is the law of selection. It preserves that which is ripe for death, it fights in favour of the disinherited and the condemned of life. By multiplying misery, quite as much as by preserving all that is miserable, it is the principal agent in promoting decadence." *

"The weak and the botched shall perish; first principle of our humanity. And they ought even to be helped to perish. What is more harmful than any vice? Practical sympathy with the botched and the weak—Christianity."†

The essential thing, he maintained, is to live, and to live as fully as possible, and he thus defined what life is:

"It is essentially appropriation, injury, conquest of the strange and weak, suppression, severity, obtrusion of its own forms, incorporation, and at least, putting it mildest, exploitation; life is essentially amoral."

Jesus Christ said: "I am come that ye may have life and that ye may have it more abundantly," but He meant by an abundant life one which is full of

* *Friedrich Nietzsche*, by M. A. Mügge, p. 45.

† *Ibid.*, p. 46.

human sympathy and love, an abundant life of usefulness and helpfulness, a life rich in human kindness and enriched by the religious sentiment and by moral aspiration.

We have seen how Nietzschean ideals have been applied and carried out by the German army in Belgium. The atrocities committed by the Germans, their organized and deliberate disregard for all the rules of civilized warfare,* and their open contempt for all the laws of humanity, actions which the Zulus and Basutos would not for a moment palliate, have not been the unforeseen results of occasional lack of discipline on the part of the least desirable elements amongst German private soldiers when carried away, for the moment only, by elementary passions. Such barbarities as have been committed in Belgium have been deliberately encouraged by the ideals of the war lords, and have been in accordance with their method of empire building on a basis of terror.

The philosopher who has inspired the ideals of the Potsdam military oligarchy employed all the powers of his keen and biting style to pour fierce contempt and bitter vituperation upon all the most characteristic of Christian ideals. He presented to the rulers of his nation, and through the German military clique to the rest of the German world, the essentially unchristian ideals of boundless pride, and of hard and calculating self-seeking, and of aggressive and cruel domination.

The Nietzschean ideals entertained fourteen years

* Mr Lloyd George has said that, in Belgium, they have killed three times as many non-combatants as they have Belgian soldiers.

ago by the German Kaiser, who has long cast greedy eyes upon China, were expressed publicly in the address which he gave to the German contingent embarking at Bremerhaven on July 27, 1900, to co-operate with other European troops in the relief of their nationals besieged in Peking. The Kaiser said:

“When you come into contact with the enemy, strike him down. Quarter is not to be given. Prisoners are not to be made. Whoever falls into your hands is into your hands delivered. Just as, a thousand years ago, the Huns, under their King Atilla, made themselves a name which still appears imposing in tradition, so may the German name become known in China in such a way that never again will a Chinaman dare to look askance at a German. The blessing of the Lord be with you. Give proof of your courage, and the Divine blessing will be attached to your colours.”

The Kaiser's ideals have been dutifully attended to by his subordinates in Belgium. Led by officers who have thoroughly studied Prussian ideals of warfare, the German soldier has been endeavouring to behave like a Hun under Attila, thus putting back the march of civilization and morality a thousand years.

Contrast with the Kaiser's instructions Lord Kitchener's message to our troops at the commencement of the present war:

“Be invariably courteous, considerate and kind. Never do anything likely to injure or destroy property, and always look upon looting as a disgraceful act.”

The mixing up of religious professions with the brutal Potsdam policy of cruelty, the repetition of

the words, "Lord, Lord," in conjunction with the advocacy of actions which are the exact opposite of those which the Lord advocated, is very characteristic of the Kaiser, but is not at all characteristic of Nietzsche, who was a materialist.* On September 19, 1914, Mr Lloyd George said that the German Kaiser told his soldiers on the way to the front:—

"On me, on me as German Emperor, the Spirit of God has descended. I am his weapon, His sword and His vizard. Woe to the disobedient!"

If the Kaiser is sincere he is a most dangerous fanatic. Men like Treitschke and Bernhardi call in the aid of man's belief in God, and make use of the theory that the Kaiser is the divinely-appointed representative of God, in order to reinforce their ungodly policy, that of bullying aggressiveness, and in order to quiet the religious scruples of those whose conscience rebels at such unchristian conduct. The value of the religious professions of German militarists may be estimated by their treatment of French and Belgian churches and priests and by their irreligious behaviour generally, such as their treatment of the wounded, the torture and violation of women and children, the wanton destruction of property, and their scorning of every law, whether of warfare or of humanity. Such conduct as that of the Germans in Belgium is thoroughly Nietzschean, and it is the exact opposite of that inculcated by Jesus Christ and by His apostles, who taught that love, sympathy,

* He wrote: "Body am I entirely, and nothing more; and soul is only the name of something in the body. Behind thy thoughts and feelings, my brother, there is a mighty lord, an unknown sage—it is called Self: it dwelleth in thy body, it is thy body. (*Friedrich Nietzsche*, by M. A. Mugge, p. 69.) According to Nietzsche all religions are false.

gentleness, chivalry, straightforwardness and honesty are supremely great virtues.

Nietzsche and his disciples complain that Jesus Christ, in the advocacy of His "slave-morality," went so far as to teach what they consider to be the absurd and pernicious doctrine that we should actually love our enemies, and that we ought to do good to those who hate us, and that we should pray for those who spitefully use us.* We are told by the advocates of the so-called "master-morality"—of the brutal morality designed by the strong in the interests of their own selfish interests—that this teaching of Jesus Christ is most pernicious for masterful men such as Prussian officers, whose supreme duty is to subordinate every ideal and principle to that of military conquest.

The Nietzschean emphatically denies that which Jesus Christ consistently taught, namely, that "the gentle shall inherit the earth." According to Nietzsche, all such Christian ideals are, in the opinion of great and strong men, mere contemptible folly, and that such ideals represent pernicious, slavish morality, a morality which, doubtless, it is most convenient for the Nietzschean that the weak and the enslaved should adopt, but which are ideals that are the exact opposite of those which strong and virile individuals or classes should entertain.

Jesus Christ is rightly called the "Prince of Peace." And He said that "those who take the sword shall perish with the sword."† He told us that He came not to destroy men's lives but to save them. He also told us to do unto others as we

* St Matt. v, 44.

† St. Matt. xxvi, 52.

should wish them to do unto us.* Further, He emphatically and consistently taught the divine supremacy of right over might, in contradistinction to the teaching of such writers as Nietzsche, Treitschke and Bernhardt who maintain the opposite, namely, that the true ideal is that there is no right except might.

When speaking of true greatness, and pointing out the grandeur of modesty, of humility, of teachableness, of childlikeness, Jesus Christ held up a little child in the midst of His disciples, who were quarrelling about precedence, and, making use of the child, He gave them an object-lesson on the subject of greatness, and said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

All this teaching is, in the opinion of Nietzsche and his disciples, the most contemptible and pernicious teaching for any nation, for any aristocracy, or for any master-man. The ideal of such writers as those we have named was displayed in the Zubern episode, which appeared to us to be even more ludicrous than it was contemptible.

Here are a few more of Nietzsche's sayings:

"If you are going to see a woman, take a whip!"

Speaking of the rise and progress of one type of man at the expense of other types, in the past, by the method which, throughout his writings, he idealizes and advocates, he wrote:

"A herd of blonde beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and masters, with military organization,

* St. Matt. vii. 12.

with the power to organize, unscrupulously placing their fearful paws upon a population, perhaps vastly superior in numbers, but still amorphous and wandering—this herd founded the State. The dream is dispelled which made the State begin with a contract. What has he to do with contracts who can command, who is master by nature, who comes on the scene with violence in deed and demeanour ? ”

By this splendid process, said Nietzsche, individuals and types shall gradually become more dominant, and therefore greater and nobler. His philosophy was all based upon the conviction that the predominant, if not the only, factor in the evolution of insects and of animals is the survival of the fittest in the struggle for existence, and this principle he applied to the life and progress of man, and maintained that superman and ever higher and higher types of men must by this method arise.

Nietzsche considered:

“a people as a detour of Nature in order to arrive at six or seven great men. The essential thing in a good and healthy aristocracy is that it should feel itself to be not the function but the end and justification, be it of royalty or of commonwealth—that it should, therefore, with a good conscience suffer the sacrifice of a countless number of men who, for its sake, must be humbled and reduced to imperfect beings, to slaves, to instruments.”

According to Nietzsche the ideal of *humility* is a mean, a contemptible and a foolish ideal: only “slave-morality ” can advocate such a contemptibly mean-spirited quality as that of humility. Further, it is maintained that humility is fatal from an utili-

tarian point of view, because it cripples the achievements of great and powerful individuals, and the activities of strong and virile sections of a great nation. But Nietzsche's fellow-countrymen are learning in the expensive school of experience to discredit the pet ideals of their forcible teacher. They are painfully discovering that conceit is an exceedingly expensive luxury. They are finding out, by costly experience, that a "swelled head" is very dangerous and that it works untold ills to a nation, to a class, or to an individual. It is modesty which usually accompanies true greatness, and it is humility which usually precedes splendid achievements. In proportion as a man is really great, his ideals far transcend his achievements and, consequently, he is humbled by the consciousness of how far he comes short, as yet, of what he may ultimately become. In the intellectual sphere, it is not the profound student, but, on the contrary, it is the ignorant person who is proud of his knowledge. Similarly, it is the small-minded man, it is not the great soul, who is usually most satisfied with his intellectual powers and achievements. A person tends to be conceited in proportion to his ignorance. In these days, when man's outlook has been so wonderfully enlarged by the rapid increase of knowledge, in an age like this when we realize, more and more fully, every day, the almost boundless magnitude of the universe, it is difficult for a man of sense and of culture to feel justified in the entertainment of pride.

A great fellow-countryman of ours* once went up to a bumptious nobody in the street and, taking

* Sidney Smith.

off his hat to him with exaggerated politeness, asked: "Are you anybody in particular?"

Mr Robert Blatchford, who for seven years was a private soldier in the British Army, graphically contrasts British and German officers. In his pointed and popular style he tells us that there is no "swank" about the English officer, but that there is a great deal of "side" and "bounce" about the German officer. He says that the very lowest German official usually has a very great deal more "side" and "swank" than any British field-marshal would stoop to display.

Mr Robert Blatchford further says that the British officer is a true gentleman in the sense that he is gentle, courteous, kindly, modest and "plays the game." He says that Tommy Atkins loves and reverences the British officer who leads the way when there is any fighting to be done, whereas the German private hates and fears his officers, who bring up the rear when there is any danger, and who lead when in retreat. We have all of us read of German officers being shot by their own men, and of our privates shedding tears when their officers fall in battle. One of our privates wrote home about the death of his colonel, and said, "There was not one man in the regiment who would not gladly have died for the colonel." The British officer is rich in that quality of gentleness which Jesus Christ said "shall inherit the earth," but the German officer, who sets out to carve a name for himself with his sword, treats his men worse than the ordinary person would treat a stray dog. Mr Blatchford says that when the Russians boarded the German cruiser which ran aground in the Baltic, they found a nine-tailed whip in each

officer's cabin. We have read a great deal during this war about the German military officer on active service, and what we have read shows him in an exceedingly unfavourable light.

The quality of gentleness which Jesus Christ said will inherit the earth—and which, as a matter of fact, is now inheriting the earth—does not seem to be conspicuous in the typical German officer and official. It is because our leading empire-builders, our soldiers, our sailors, our administrators, our politicians, our officials, etc., are gentle, tactful, sympathetic and considerate that ours has become a great, a loyal and a growing empire. It is because the would-be founders of a German colonial empire are disciples of Nietzsche that they cannot found such an empire as ours. They cannot even understand upon what foundation our empire is built up. They were confident that it would fall to pieces if we were engaged in a great European war, whereas every part of our empire has come forward with great enthusiasm to take part in this mighty campaign. It remains to be seen by the world which is looking on with intense interest at this great war, and is watching the great clash of ideals, whether, on the one hand, the principles advocated by Nietzscheans like Bernhardt and put into practice by the German mailed fist in Belgium, or, on the other hand, those ideals which are put forward by Jesus Christ, will justify themselves in the present tremendous European crisis—a crisis which, as I have said, represents a great clash of rival ideals.

The British soldier, who learnt humility in the Boer war, is a vastly superior combatant now from what he was at the commencement of the South

African campaign. Russia acquired much humility, and therefore gained considerable power, as the result of her defeat at the hands of Japan. The typical Russian is by nature humble, courteous, gentle and patient. He is inclined also to adopt even the exaggerated opinions of Tolstoy on the subject of self-defence. Every verse of the Russian national anthem is a prayer for peace. The humility which the French learned in 1870 and which they have not yet unlearned, is the source of far greater power to them, during this great test of strength, than is the bombast of the German and his boundless confidence in the power of his mailed fist, bombast and over-confidence which were largely born of the campaign of 1870. (Some one has said that Germany has made war now because war made Germany then.)

A leading article in the *Star*,* dealing with the subject which we are considering, says:

“This war is a great moral and spiritual conflict between a new gospel of cruelty and the old gospel of love and pity and beatitude. The faith which the German philosopher spurned as a ‘slave-morality’ is now on its trial. *The Sermon on the Mount is challenged by the Sermon of Louvain*. Christendom is assailed by the ‘God of Blood and Iron.’”

Punch remarks:—“One touch of Nietzsche makes the whole world sin.”

* On September 5, 1914.

PART II

THE ideals of Christianity being such as we have indicated and being, as we have seen, the opposite of those of Nietzsche, Christians are being asked several questions during this war, especially by the various schools of atheists who are unpatriotic. They ask, for instance: How has it come about that, at the present time, Christendom is one vast armed camp, and several Christian nations are at war? The answer is that it was not the teaching of Jesus Christ, but that it was the teaching of such men as Nietzsche which caused the war.

We are asked: Is war unchristian? If it be so, and if peace at any price be the true ideal of Christendom, how can every section of the Christian Church in the British Empire—speaking in the name of Jesus Christ—advocate carrying on the war in which we are engaged with the utmost energy? The reply is: Because the disciples of Nietzsche compelled the Allies to defend each other and themselves.

Various atheist organizations in this country are doing violence to any patriotic sentiments they may once have felt in order to make the most of the splendid opportunity, as they regard it to be, which is presented by the fact that British Christians are enthusiastic supporters of the war in which we are engaged. The official organ of the National Secular Society, for instance, is being used by the president to sneer at the British Empire for going to war.

In the current issue of the official organ of the Rationalist Press Association (September) Mr Joseph McCabe, the leading spirit of the R.P.A., writes:

" If you really believe you must turn the other cheek to the smiter, you cannot go to war."

The question therefore arises: Is war unchristian under all conceivable circumstances? Are Christians committed, without reserve, to the principle of peace at any price?

The causes which led the British Empire to go to war, and the moral questions which such a great war raises, are somewhat complex. Let us then begin the consideration of the question which we have to answer by taking the case of an individual. Let it be granted that, speaking generally, it is an essential part of the Christian ideal for the *individual* to " turn the other cheek " when he himself is smitten. Let us, for the sake of argument, agree that, when any individual is violently attacked, it is not a Christian action on his part to retaliate with violence. Let us further assume that it is certainly in accordance with the Christian code of ethics to return good for evil. Let us concede all this, for the moment, although I do not go so far as to assert that this one-sided aspect represents a full and an accurate description of the Christian code of behaviour.* Let us, however, assume, for a moment, that the above is an accurate sketch of the Christian ideal.

* There is the question of self-defence, of self-preservation. Is a Christian to allow himself to be murdered, for instance. Further, there is the problem of how far we are obliged to defend the right. Jesus Christ tells us that He did not come " to bring peace, but a sword " and that His teaching would set one member of a family against another. He says that He came to " destroy the works of the devil." His attitude towards the Scribes and Pharisees was by no means of the Tolstoy type. Jesus Christ was not averse from feeling intensely, and from forcibly displaying, burning righteous indignation when it was called for.

What then? It would not follow from this ideal of non-resistance to *personal* assault and battery that if a man were responsible for safely escorting a small girl, at night, down a dark lane, infested with bad characters, it would be an unchristian action on his part, or a display of a vicious temper, if, in the event of the little girl being violently set upon by roughs of the Nietzschean type, her protector energetically attacked those roughs *in defence of the child*, at whatever danger to himself. And the nation is made up of individuals. Therefore, what is right in the case of each and of all the individuals composing a nation, must surely be right in the case of the nation as a whole, when acting in its corporate capacity. The maintenance of a police force, for instance, is not immoral, it is maintained in the interests of morality. Nor is the arming of the police force immoral, if they are called upon to deal with armed blackguards.

That which is right for each one of the individuals composing a nation, when each is acting alone, must also be right for those same individuals when they are acting together, in unison, as a nation. The particular international case which we are considering is the justification, or otherwise, for the British Empire bearing arms on behalf of the gallant inhabitants of little Belgium against the powerful, unscrupulous and cruel German military oligarchy, which has unprovokedly invaded and cruelly oppressed the Belgians.

Mr Bonar Law, speaking in the House of Commons on August 27, 1914, about the invasion by the Germans of Belgium, said our admiration and our sympathy

"go out in fullest measure to the Belgian people, who have endured, and are now enduring, all the horrors of war. After making every allowance for the sources from which our information comes, we do not doubt that they are enduring them in a form which ought to be impossible amongst civilized nations. Whatever doubt may have been felt among us as to the justice or the necessity of our taking part in this war has, I think, been removed by what has happened and is happening in Belgium. What has happened there confirms the belief in which we entered upon this war, that it is in reality a struggle of the moral influences of civilization against brute force—a force which is none the less brutal because it has at its disposal all the material resources of invention and of science."

We have to bear in mind that we had solemnly guaranteed, on paper, to maintain, inviolate, the independence of gallant little Belgium and to secure her freedom from invasion. Further, we have to recollect that Germany also had deliberately signed the treaty guaranteeing the independence of Belgium. Moreover, we must bear in mind that we knew beforehand something of the atrocious German method of warfare. There is, therefore, over against the Christian ideal of gentleness, the equally Christian ideal of chivalrously defending the weak, and there is the moral obligation which is imposed upon us by our Christian code, to stand between inhuman bullies and defenceless women and children whom we had guaranteed to defend. There is the Christian ideal of unsullied national righteousness to be remembered and the Christian ideal of keeping inviolate our national promises. We were driven to choose between the alternative of a dishonourable

and cowardly peace at any price, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, our humanitarian duties. One of the most characteristic of Christ's sayings is: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (St John, xv, 13).

Mr Asquith said in the House of Commons on August 6, 1914:

"We are fighting to vindicate the principle that small nationalities are not to be crushed in defiance of international good faith by the arbitrary will of a strong and overmastering Power."

And at the Guildhall he confessed:

"For my part, I say that sooner than be a silent witness, which means in effect a willing accomplice, of this tragic triumph of force over law and of brutality over freedom, I would see this country of ours blotted out of the page of history."

Again, in the House of Commons on August 27, 1914, he said:

"We are defending at the same time two great causes—the independence of small States and the sanctity of international covenants."

The supreme guarantee of European peace is international reliance upon solemn international pledges. Therefore, to fight on behalf of national pledges, is to fight in order to secure the future peace of the world.

We have further to bear in mind that we adopted every possible means at our disposal to keep the

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peace of Europe from the time that it began to be endangered, and that, later on, we used every available means to dissuade the military oligarchy of Prussia from violating Germany's solemn guarantee, and from invading, unprovokedly, the territory of that splendid and heroic little nation of free men—the Belgians.

As Mr Asquith said in the House of Commons on August 27, 1914:

"We strove with all our might, as every one now knows, to prevent the outbreak of war, and when that was no longer possible, to limit its area."

We strained our friendship with Russia almost to breaking point to keep the peace,* but Germany had made up her mind to fight and she would not listen to us. The Germans not only knew very well that we had pledged our word, and that in 1870 we threatened to go to war if either France or Germany invaded Belgium, but they were also quite well aware that they themselves had solemnly guaranteed Belgium's freedom from invasion. Moreover, they candidly admitted in public that they were doing wrong in ignoring their solemn promise, but that self-interest, which knows no laws, demanded that the wrong should be perpetrated. The German Chancellor said in their Parliament:

"We knew we were doing wrong in invading the neutrality of Belgium."

* See our Government's White Paper, "Correspondence respecting the European Crisis," No. 6, 1914.

Lord Rosebery's comment upon this admission was:

"A nation that begins a great war by declaring that its foundation is wrong . . . is likely to fare badly if there be a God in Heaven."

It is said that Germany was only prevented from treating Switzerland in the same way that Belgium was treated by the fact that Switzerland mobilized in twenty-four hours 200,000 men on the Swiss frontier, and the Swiss soldier is well known to shoot better than any other soldier in Europe.

Germany knew very well that such a violation of national pledges on her part—as the invasion of Luxemburg and Belgium, especially if we acquiesced in such violation, would reduce to mere waste paper any future promises which might be made by the Powers, whenever the occasion for violating these promises arose. We were told by the German Government that it would be absurd for us to intervene on behalf of Belgium for the sake of a mere "scrap of paper,"* and yet Germany tried to buy our dishonour with her mere promise not to do that which, according to innumerable German writers, it was the intention of Germany to do as soon as she had a chance. (Publicly professed contempt for written guarantees as being mere "scraps of paper" is somewhat disquieting at a time when so much of the

* Sir E. Goschen in his despatch to Sir Edward Grey (August 8, 1914) reports that in his interview with the German Chancellor his Excellency said "the the step taken by His Majesty's Government was terrible to a degree; just for a word, 'neutrality,' a word which in war time had been so often disregarded—just for a scrap of paper Great Britain was going to make war." See White Paper "Miscellaneous, No. 8, 1914."

money that is in circulation throughout Europe consists of "scraps of paper.")

Undoubtedly, it is against the Christian ideal for an individual easily to lose his temper when he is personally attacked, injured or insulted, but certainly it is not part of the Christian ideal that *righteous* indignation is wicked, or that gross unrighteousness should be allowed free scope at our neighbours' expense. That indignation which is aroused in good men when they witness grossly unrighteous and cruel actions, such indignation as this is an essential characteristic of righteous people. It is no part of the Christian ideal that it is wrong to be passionately indignant when a great nation, acting upon the principles of Nietzsche, deliberately dethrones right in order to place might upon the throne. It is not unchristian to be indignant when an unscrupulous nation endeavours to bribe us to follow its evil example, and to treat our solemn pledges to defend the weak as if such pledges were mere "scraps of paper." We went to war with Germany, however, not so much because we were passionately indignant, but because we calmly, and as a matter of course, obeyed the imperative demand of written obligations and of national duty.

It does not need a very high code of ethics, nor a very profound knowledge of human life, to be convinced that truthfulness is not only right but also the best policy: but the rulers of Germany appear to entertain quite a different opinion, both as regards keeping promises, and also issuing war news.

Might is very far, indeed, from being identical with right, and the capacity to rob is by no means the same thing as justification for robbery. We do

not adopt conscription and we have a very small standing army, and we strive to live at peace. We are convinced that "thrice armed is he who hath his quarrel just." But the Prussian principle is "Thrice should he quarrel who is justly armed, and four times armed is he who gets his blow in first," as an American humorist expresses the German version of the motto. We do all in our power to live at peace with other nations, but we have international duties which ought not to be shirked when the strong mailed fist unjustifiably and unprovoked strikes down the weak.

Nietzsche and his German disciples believed intensely in the inevitableness of the victory to be secured by big battalions. We believe as intensely in the ultimate triumph of right over might. The genuinely Christian view is that smaller battalions which are obviously in the right are much more likely to win in the long run than are larger battalions which are obviously in the wrong. The moral factor is a most important one in war as it is in all other human activities. Indeed, the moral factor counts for far more in modern warfare than it did when bloodshed in war was less than it now is, and when there were long intervals between battles.

We are not at war because we enjoy fighting, nor because we believe in militarism, but, on the contrary, because we do not believe in militarism and because we intend to stamp out the cause of it. We fight because we are determined to put an end to Potsdam bullying now that it has grossly exceeded all endurable bounds.

The other day a cultured and able German confessed to me that he sincerely hoped that we would win because, said he, it is deplorable that the German

people should be dominated by the Potsdam military oligarchy, and he considered that nothing but defeat on the battlefield could remove the grip of military despotism from the neck of the German people.

We fight because it is not for the good of Europe that all the smaller nations should be dominated by the German military clique and live in constant fear of their lives and liberties. Further, it is a very bad thing for mankind that, even during times of peace, the whole of Europe should remain a great armed camp, generation after generation. We are out to put an end to gigantic armaments. "Never again!" is our motto in this war, and it is a combat which must be resolutely carried to a successful and to a complete conclusion.

The critics of Christianity are fond of reminding us, now that we are at war, that Jesus Christ said: "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." We reply: It was not Great Britain that began taking up the sword, and if those who did so are to perish with the sword, it is obvious that some one must wield that sword of punishment. Very much against our will we were driven to draw the executioner's sword, in order to defend little Belgium against Germany, who, having taken the sword, will doubtless perish with the sword.

Advocates of peace at any price sometimes ask the question, does not the Bible say, "Thou shalt not kill?" We reply: "Yes, it does say so, but it is careful to add: 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, *by man shall his blood be shed.*'" The object of the second part of the Commandment is to enforce the first part of it, on the principle that it is just as important to provide for the enforce-

ment of laws as to draw up the laws. When, in the interests of law, order and peace, the executioner draws his sword, he is acting in obedience to the Sixth Commandment, not in violation of it. Force has to be opposed by force when all other methods have failed.

A certain nobleman who lived in the Middle Ages was very irate with one of his retainers who, when savagely attacked by his master's large dog, transfixed it with the business end of a spear. When called to task by his master, he explained that it was a question of his life or the dog's life, and that he killed the dog in self-defence. His master replied: "Why did you not keep it off with the butt end of your spear?" "So I would have done, my Lord," replied the retainer, "if it had tried to bite me with its *tail*."

Military aggression is not only unchristian and cruel, it is also unwise; because it is very wasteful, it is exceedingly costly. Imagine the cost of European conscription during the last forty years. Add to this the expenses of this gigantic war. From a purely utilitarian and materialistic point of view, the method of settling disputes by warfare does not pay. It is not we who are the advocates of war, it is our enemies who consider war to be an integral part of their national policy. The arbitrament of the sword, speaking generally, is not only immoral (because it appeals to might instead of to right), but war is terribly wasteful also. To settle disputes by fighting, whether the conflict be between different nations, or between different classes, or between different individuals, is a primitive, a savage, a costly, an unintelligent, and, further, it is not a righteous method of settling disagreements. That

is one of the primary reasons why we are at war: we are out to fight an aggressive militarism which aims at being the arbiter of the destinies of the nations of Europe. Defensive warfare is sometimes necessary because by no other means can we repel unprovoked assaults.

So long as human nature remains anything like what it is at present, and so long as a single nation remains inadequately Christian, armed to the teeth, and dominated by followers of Nietzsche, justice, truth, mercy and love—to say nothing of self-defence—compel those who are the greatest lovers of peace occasionally to take up the sword in the defence of the weak, and in the cause of truth and right, and on behalf of peace.

In the abstract, the warlike spirit is as unwise and as wasteful as is the litigious spirit, but so long as human nature remains what it is, the most Christian of nations cannot dispense either with armies and navies, or with policemen, with law courts and with prisons. If it be right for each nation to keep a police force to deal with dangerous and lawless individuals, it is also right for the nations of Europe to keep and to recruit military and naval forces to deal with organized national aggression, and in order to keep in check the brutality and crime advocated by unscrupulous oligarchies when they put into practice these anti-social ideals.

Our critics argue that if we should love our enemies, all war is antichristian. But supposing that my personal enemy, Jones, whom I ought to love, is murdering my family, ought I to stand aside and let him do it? Certainly not. And does not the same principle apply to nations?

We should fight in a Christian manner. It cannot be claimed that every British soldier and sailor is a perfect Christian saint, nor can it be maintained that every British combatant would for a moment profess to be an ideal Christian saint, but nearly every British soldier and sailor is a true sportsman who, when he is at war, fights fair and acts like a gentleman. He makes it a point of honour, not only to "play up," but also to "*play the game*." He feels no temptation to violate international laws of warfare, or the laws of humanity. "Play up, and *play the game*," is his motto, and he unhesitatingly displays chivalry in his treatment of a wounded enemy. He risks his life, as a matter of course, to save the foeman who is drowning. He treats with consideration the prisoner of war. His heart goes out readily to the starving non-combatant who falls into his hands. He behaves thus as a matter of course, in spite of the fact that Germans have fired at him while he was attending to their wounded and in spite of the fact that they have committed other equally barbarous acts. He does not find it impossible to adopt this high Christian ideal of warfare. He would rather die than "hit a man when he is down." Further, as a Christian sportsman, he can and he does display a Christian spirit towards the foeman whom he has fought. He fraternizes with the captured enemy if the latter has made any effort at all to fight fair, and he shares his little luxuries with the foeman's family. If, however, the captured German is known not only to have massacred, in cold blood, but also to have tortured non-combatants of both sexes and of all ages, righteous indignation is essentially Christian. If one of our prisoners

of war is known to have tortured, fiendishly, defenceless women and little children, without any provocation, and if he was caught in the very act of firing on the Red Cross, and if he has committed other atrocious violations of all the rules of civilized warfare, and outraged every law of humanity, it needs a great deal of the Nietzschean spirit on the part of our soldiers to enable them to appreciate such a foeman. But even in such cases as these, our men exercise considerable self-restraint, and are likely to act quite correctly, and to behave as men and as Christian gentlemen.

As a nation we do not hate the German people. Thousands of German and Austrian waiters are allowed to remain in regular employment in this country, and they appear to be very well treated during the war, and to get well tipped. They do not appear to be treated differently now from what they were last year, before the war broke out. We do not hate individual Germans as such. But, undoubtedly, we fully intend wholly to frustrate the greedy, the cruel and the utterly lawless schemes and methods of the Potsdam military clique, and to bring their despotism to an end. Even the average German himself is beginning painfully to realize that the blood-and-iron tyranny under which he suffers is a curse, and in Germany the danger of internal rebellion is recognized as being very considerable.

The issue that is being fought out in this great war is largely a moral issue. We have the ideals of Jesus Christ on the one hand, and those of Nietzsche on the other hand. Perhaps the most characteristic of Jesus Christ's ideals is that expressed in the paradox, He that would save his

life (or his soul or self)* shall lose it, but he who is willing to lose his life (or soul or self)* for a great cause is the man who really lives. That is to say, the man who enjoys the true secret of how to live, the man whose life is truly rich, is the man whose life is guided by the Christian ideal and standard of values, one of the chief of which standards of value is that unselfishness is the highest good, and that selfishness is the greatest curse. Love is the fulfilling of the law: hate is the negation of the law. That which exalts an individual, or a class, or a whole people, is—not the struggle to get—but the effort to give; not the struggle to save and to lavish upon self—whether health, time, money, energy, culture, or any of the other things that enrich life—not selfishly to save up these for one's own exclusive personal use, but, on the contrary, the effort to lavish them all upon a truly worthy cause, such as, for example, upon leaving the world a little better than we found it by supporting right against might at this time of international crisis. It says a great deal for the spirit of the modern British citizen that, in proportion as it becomes more and more obvious to him that to fight in this gigantic war means that he will have to undergo far more laborious toil and much greater risk of bloodshed than was at first supposed, and the more vividly he realizes that to enlist means to face dangers of death far greater than appeared to be the case at the outset, and the clearer it becomes to him, day by day, that the sufferings which our soldiers are called upon to endure will not, as in past wars, be under the lime-light and beneath the eye of the public, but, on the

* St Matt. xvi, 25. The word employed is *ψυχή*.

contrary, that the fighting will take place enshrouded in the dark fog of war, and be carefully hidden by the rigour of the Press Bureau from the eyes of those at home, the more clearly, I say, and the more fully the British citizen understands how little he himself can get out of his self-sacrifice on the battlefield, the greater is the enthusiasm which he displays in coming forward to bear his part in the exceedingly difficult and dangerous task which the Empire is undertaking. It is the task of defending right against might. It is the task of supporting the down-trodden against cruel tyrants. It is the task of combating the selfish German military clique and a Government which regards written promises as mere scraps of waste paper. Ours is the task of supporting the noble cause of freedom-loving democracy against a tyrannous, cruel and brutal oligarchy.

Our task is also to "play the game," even though our enemy may make a point of scorning every international and humanitarian rule of combat.

Surely the noble spirit of our combatants, together with the widespread spirit of comradeship and brotherhood which has united into one coherent whole the many different constituents of the great British Empire, are distinctly Christian, and it is a spirit which must be appreciated by every true man and by every genuine woman.

We stand—not for slave-morality—but for the noble, manly morality of those who have learnt in the school of freedom what chivalry owes to the weak and to the oppressed. We advocate and we endeavour to practise a high morality, one which insists that those who play fair owe it to themselves and to their cause to play the game even when

their foe spurns all the rules which civilization has gradually drawn up and unanimously subscribed to. Our code of honour teaches us that the islander who is himself secure in his sea-girt home owes much to those small European States which are separated from the mighty German forces only by mere boundary lines, and who have only a "scrap of paper" between them and the aggressive and cruel tyranny of a war machine which, for a generation, has terrorized Europe.

It is objected by our critics that one reason why we went to war with Germany was that national self-interest insisted that we should preserve the balance of power on the Continent.

But we do our best to preserve the balance of power because that balance of power is the guarantee of the peace of the world. To permit one aggressive country to become very strong by absorbing smaller and weaker countries would be to acquiesce in a great danger to the peace of Europe. Further, what a man does for his country may be purely unselfish and unselfishness is an essentially Christian virtue. The Christian can fully endorse the sentiment expressed by the grand old pagan who said, "Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori."

Canon G. M. Glazebrook sent to the *Church Family Newspaper* a letter in which he said:—

"When a *country* is threatened with wanton aggression,* is self-defence justifiable? Let us think of the persons who make up the people. Each one of them may, perhaps, feel it his Christian duty not to resist injury to himself. But his care for himself is only one

* Germany's greedy eyes were upon the British Empire; that was her ultimate objective.

part of his duty. His countrymen are his neighbours, for whom he is responsible. If he knows anything of Austrian rule in Italy, he knows that a military tyranny puts men's lives and women's honour at the mercy of a brutal soldiery. Is it his duty, by submitting to an invader, to put millions of his countrymen under such a degrading yoke?

"But the Christian definition of one's neighbour is wider than that of one's countryman; it includes all whom we have power to succour. Every one of us is concerned to maintain, as far as he may, the police of the world, which alone prevents the baser elements of humanity from conquering and ruling the nobler. That police can only be efficient if the governments of various nations agree to act in concert, and if their agreements are observed as honourably as those which bind individuals. For there is no supreme political power such as the Roman Empire once was, which can keep order by its own authority. Surely, then, every Christian citizen is concerned to see that his own government, through which alone he can act, makes only such engagements as are in the general interest, and faithfully carries out such engagements when made.

"A war which is waged on behalf of an ally who is the victim of aggression, a war waged in the interest of mankind, and in obedience to the Christian law which forbids, above all things, a selfish inactivity," such a war is righteous and necessary.

One more point remains to be considered.

Some Christian preachers are telling their congregations that God caused this war, and they go on to explain why God caused this great European conflagration.

On the other hand many opponents of Christian theism are asking: "You maintain that God does

everything. Therefore you must believe that God caused this war. But how can you also maintain that the causer of all this misery and crime is all-holy and all-loving? If God be almighty, even if He did not actually cause the war, He could certainly have prevented it, but He did not do so."

I reply:—When He created man, God was faced with this alternative: (a) Either man must be endowed with a conscience and with the power to choose between right and wrong, in which case man would be to blame whenever he adopted the evil alternative instead of the good one. Or else (b) man must be merely non-moral. There was no other alternative. Morality, righteousness, consists of choosing rightly, when the opposite alternative of choosing wrongly is present. If there be no choice, there can be no morality. God gave man a conscience and some measure of freedom of choice between moral alternatives. God is responsible for giving man that gift, a gift which raised man out of the non-moral sphere into the sphere where morality becomes possible; but it is man who is responsible for the use or the abuse which he makes of his gift of freedom. That being so, it is wholly unjust to accuse God of having precipitated this war: man is responsible for having caused it. We do not blame God when a burglary takes place or when a murder is committed by an individual, why then should we blame God when a whole nation resorts to robbery with violence?

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